

Congregational Tidings

*No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here!*



A weekly newsletter



www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalUCCWaterlooIowa

January 27, 2021

CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING SUMMARY



The annual meeting of the First Congregational UCC was successfully held on Sunday, January 24, 2020 from 12:30-2:00 PM via zoom. Participants numbered about the same as in-person meetings the last couple of years. Thank

you to all who attended. Major topics of business were: 1) approval of the balanced 2021 church budget, 2) approval of nominated officers and board/committee members, 3) approval of the proposed Bylaws revisions, and 4) approval for the Pipe Organ Maintenance & Enhancement Project and Capital Fund Campaign. Our best wishes to Anne Hoekstra as the incoming Moderator. Please give Anne your full support and care.

First Congregational UCC Reopening Protocol

The First Congregational UCC Board of Trustees approved a set of documents explaining the protocol we will follow to allow small groups to begin using the church building & grounds for meetings and events, when appropriate. Our Reopening Committee also recommended these documents. The documents are available for your review and download from our website at www.firstcongucc.org.

If you have a group of six or less who are interested in using the church for a meeting or event, please review the documents, fill out the request form, and submit it per instructions for review and approval. The decision to allow the gathering will depend on many variables including the current status of COVID in Black Hawk County.

Please submit your completed request form to Anne Hoekstra or Michelle Wolfe for approval.

Did You Ever Notice ...?



Did you notice how great and important families are? Did you ever notice how your brothers and sisters aren't always your blood relatives?

Did you ever notice how you feel different, better when you're with family? We have a great family here at First Church, don't we? We take care of each other and those around us. I wonder who else would like to be a part of our family? Is there someone you know who would benefit from and enjoy being our sister or brother? There are probably a lot of people who could use a family like ours these days. Who do you know?

Protect Others ... Protect Yourself!!

(the numbers keep going up)



- Wear your face mask, not just for yourself, but to protect everyone around you.
- Stay at least 6'0" from everyone WITH your face mask on.
- Stay away from all places where you cannot maintain a safe distance from others.
- Remind others to follow the same guidelines ... it's a group effort ... a family effort.

PPRC Committee

The PPRC committee will meet on the first Tuesday evening of each month, at 7:00 pm (Via Zoom).

Words of Appreciation from the Past Moderator

The last three years have been unprecedented in the history of our church. We've had a senior minister retire and another resign, resulting in two pastoral searches. We've had multiple staff turnovers. And, of course, we've had a pandemic that has physically separated our church family. But, at the same time, there have been many Joys along the way. And most of those Joys have come from You, our church family.

If I were to relate all the instances when I, as Moderator, have received invaluable assistance and support from church family members, you would have many pages to read. And every page would be justified and heartfelt. And even then, I would risk leaving out someone who helped our church efforts, by helping me, along the way. Thank you, All.

Today, I am taking the liberty of placing one particular group in the spotlight. These people were folks with whom I conversed most every week during my three years as your Moderator. Per our Bylaws, these people are known as the Personnel Committee, but I call them Indispensable. They are Dave Allbaugh (Treasurer), Keith Jorgensen (Clerk), Cliff Highnam (Past Moderator), and Barb Mardis (At-Large).

These were not people who were there to agree with me or to pat me on the back. I would have been disappointed if they had. These were church family members discussing, at my request, often times difficult issues with nothing but our church's best interest at heart. They were steadfast and passionate in their service to our church. Over three years the hours spent in meetings, the sleepless nights, and the work done on your behalf is staggering. My heartfelt "Thanks!" is simply not enough. Please thank these people when you see them.



Taking Care of Our Family

Please let Pastor Bret, Michelle, or Anne know of those we should be keeping close ...

Continued prayers for Peter Blankenfeld in the Cedar Falls Care center living with the effects of dementia more each week ... and for Mike and Diana as they care for him

Continued prayers for the Prescott family and the many burdens they are bearing

Continued prayers for Danny Steiber as his medical journey and questions continue

Continued prayers for Brian Lynch as he serves us in his overseas deployment

Prayers and support for our church family and the new leadership we have elected



Birthdays

Anniversaries

5
Paul Farmer
Kathy Franke
7
Tyler Greene
8
Steve Peters
Clark Holdiman
Jenner Buck
9
Dale Hatinger
Jonathan Yarngo
10
Jeffrey
Quackenbush
Carol Williams

12
Ruth Linderman
13
Regan Casteel
14
Brittney Becker
Kari Lindaman
16
Aidan Kelley
Corina Marie
Holdiman
Arlo Prescott
17
Brandon Becker
Kati (Thompson)
Collins

18
Nancy Stevenson
19
Emily Stevenson
23
Matt Ensworth
Gordon Lauterbach
26
Justin Dams
27
Greta May McCaffrey
28
Audrey Adams-Sorge
Julie Kiefer

28
Bob & Beth Hurley



February 2021

Minister's Musings: February 2021

Greetings members and friends of First Congregational UCC!

It has been a blessing to celebrate worship with you weekly in the last few months while we have also done some special services. All Saints/Remembrance Sunday went well, as did our Stewardship Sunday, as well as our Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany services. We have also created a Thanksgiving and a Christmas Concert for your enjoyment, and it has been a blessing to see many of you participate in those. Also, we have learned more about our stories surrounding the holidays with our Advent Devotionals. How lovely to read what you all wrote!

We will continue to do some special services in the coming months, as well as opportunities to interact with one another via virtual zoom sessions, etc. I am putting a call out to all of you who are interested in science and technology to let me know if you have ideas and would like to participate in a Science and Technology Sunday on February 14th. How do they influence your faith, and your faith influence how you relate to them? Please email, text, or call me if you would like to contribute to making that Sunday special for our congregation and wider community.

Lent is fast approaching too, and we will have an Ash Wednesday virtual service on February 17th at 7 p.m. Whether we do it prerecorded or as a zoom service is still being investigated. But we hope you will want to also participate in this service that helps prepare us for spiritual reflection and introspection.

Plans are also underway for us watching the movie, *Amistad*, as a church and having a discussion afterwards on either Friday, Feb. 26th or Saturday, Feb. 27th. On March 1st, we will have "Amistad Sunday," which I understand will be new to you as a congregation. Our Congregational forbearers were instrumental in freeing the captives who landed on Long Island and were transported by the US Navy to Connecticut after they had been at sea after having been sold into slavery in Cuba. It is a fascinating story, and a part of our American and UCC history that too few are familiar with, so this is a great educational opportunity, as well as a time to talk with one another about the movie.

Don't forget the Sunday morning book studies we are doing at 9:20 a.m. every Sunday. It is open to both men and women now. We are now reading, *Faithiest*. Please also remember that we have an open fellowship time on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m., where we can catch up with one another on things going on in our lives. It is always good to see your smiling faces!

I pray that 2021 will be a year of abundant blessings for our congregation and the ministries that we continue as we reach out to one another and our wider community. I hope you are all doing well and staying safe in this time of pandemic. Please let me know if you or someone else in the church is in need of a pastoral call or counsel. We are all in this together!

Love and peace,
Pastor Bret

revbmyers@yahoo.com
608-370-9472 cell

Moderator's Musings: February 2021

January is nearly over, and even though we are in the midst of winter, the days are getting longer--and I am hopeful! Although I complain about the cold of winter, I do appreciate its beauty. Fresh snow enlivens our barren landscape, making everything appear pristine and refreshed. And I know spring follows the quiet of winter.

As I begin my duties as moderator for First C and look upon the year ahead, I feel hopeful-- though not being together to worship for several more months is difficult. Like winter, we can feel bleak--not being able to see each other. But we have continued as church in spite of our obstacles. I was reminded of this on Sunday at the annual meeting--seeing familiar faces, reading the list of people who are willing to serve in the coming year, reviewing accomplishments of 2020. We have many talented, generous folks in our congregation willing to share themselves with the congregation and the wider community.

I want to thank everyone who served so faithfully this past year, and to those that are stepping up to serve in the coming year. I especially want to thank Paul Greene, who gave so generously of himself these past 3 years. We are all the body of Christ, and we are all important as part of the our community of faith. Thank you! I look forward to partnering with you as we continue to be the Church.

Anne Hoekstra

Love INC Service Project:

The Board of Missions has agreed to participate in an activity involving Love INC. Our participation will start immediately and last as long as there is interest. Love INC is accepting donations for their stores to assist persons in need of essential items. The items can be delivered to:

2603 Rainbow Drive Suite 2, Cedar Falls, IA 50613 from 9 AM to 3 PM, M-F. Love INC can be contacted at 319.266.1264, M-F, 9 AM – 12 PM.

Essential items can also be dropped off at **First Congregational Church on T/TH from 9:00 – 12:00.** Your donations can be placed in a donation box located in the Crossroads area. If you do not have code or key access to the church, Kyle will answer the door bell located at the main door under the veranda off the parking lot.

Essential items include *unopened packages of non-perishable foodstuffs, shampoo, deodorant, soap, toilet paper, laundry detergent, cleaning supplies, etc.* Food should be kept separate from cleaning supplies.

Thanks for considering participation in this wonderful program for distributing essential items to persons in our community who are in need.

Cliff Highnam, Chair, Board of Missions



Create an endowment of love. Please consider including our church in your estate planning.

F I R S T C O N G R E G A T I O N A L U C C

First Congregational UCC
608 WEST FOURTH STREET
WATERLOO, IOWA 50702

Congregational Tidings

Place
Stamp
Here